

THE NEW PHYSICIAN IN GERMANY

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Many people seem to think that scientists have their laboratories in ivory towers and pursue their abstract work in a rarefied atmosphere untouched by the events of the times. This idea is not true even in normal times, for even then there is a close reciprocal exchange between political life and the sciences. It is still less true in times of great upheaval such as we are experiencing now.

The author, himself a National-Socialist doctor, participated in the early phases of the present war in Europe and is now practicing in Japan. He shows the profound change in the conception of the physician's calling which has taken place in Germany as the result of the National-Socialist Revolution.—K.M.

FROM ancient times to this day, the European physician has drawn his strength from the primeval feeling for divine order and Olympian harmony. All the peoples of Indo-Germanic origin have had this feeling for an order which is being perfected in the world, a feeling which is a fundamental element of culture common to them all. From this feeling of the world being a complete whole, a cosmos, they also tried to create their social order. It is to this conception that the physician owes the esteem and place he enjoys among the people. The Greek Hippocrates, the Roman Galen, and the German Paracelsus can be considered as factors of order in that they held themselves responsible for every threat to the health of the people. They were healers, scientists, and educators, and they demanded influence on legislation affecting health.

"VICTIMS OF ENVIRONMENT"

The physician of the liberalistic era was of an entirely different type. Here the physician was considered the guardian of the individual's personal welfare. Humanitarian principles were the criterion. This degenerated into incurable lunatics being surrounded by comforts of which they were usually not in the least aware. Even the criminal was, according to liberalistic ideas, nothing but an unfortunate "victim of his unfavorable

environment." Punishment and elimination were considered inhuman; the criminal was to be reformed by sympathetic care. He was to be pitied, since Nature had disinherited him, or, to use another phrase: "The murdered, not the murderer, is guilty." Prisons were turned into educational institutions with libraries and movies.

I recall a remarkable case that took place in the twenties. A notorious inveterate thief was serving his sentence in a Dresden prison. His wife (a former prostitute) and eight children were being supported by public funds. This woman addressed a letter to the public prosecutor with the request that her husband be given short leave from the prison as otherwise she would be in danger of committing adultery. As grotesque as it may sound, the public prosecutor, enmeshed in the prevailing ideas of liberalism, granted this request. The German nation was soon supporting a ninth child of this corrupt heritage and voluntarily burdened itself with the future crimes of this depraved family.

In those days of unemployment, many a healthy, conscientious laborer could not only not marry—much less think of providing his nation with healthy children—but he often could not even satisfy his hunger, and this although he was capable, industrious, and willing and would have been glad to work.

THE "RIGHT TO ONE'S OWN BODY"

The liberalist-humane *Zeitgeist* regarded the fundamental innocence of the sick person for his sickness as a moral obligation for the physician to provide all possible aid. For the very fact of having been born gave every individual an undisputed claim to the greatest possible enjoyment of life. The "right to one's own body" was proclaimed. The "nation" in the sense of a biological existence, of an actually existing entity, was unknown. It was regarded as an accidental group of human beings living under a commonly recognized social covenant and was conceded no claim to care or rights. The individual embodied the life of the nation and expected all enjoyment of life for himself. And the physician was his health solicitor.

The idea of the clan had long lost its vitality: now even marriage as a biological form was questioned. The consequences of the "right to one's own body" rapidly led to radical antibiological, anti-Christian, and antinational trends, enthusiastically defended by the democracies and most sharply formulated by communism. The liberalistic physician, trained in the materialistic ideas of the natural sciences, demanded the unlimited right for himself and his patients to do what they liked, what from their point of view seemed advantageous or agreeable. Abortion was purely the affair of the pregnant woman. The aim of sexual life was not the biological maintenance of the species but a matter to be decided by each individual for himself. The State was not to oppose the manufacture and sale of contraceptives: on the contrary, it was to support this in a suitable manner. It was the task of medical science to look for the best and most harmless means. Furthermore, the State was not to oppose such pleasures as the individual could procure at his own risk, even if they undermined his existence. The State should only reduce the individual's risk. This attitude led, for example, to opposition against the drug laws.

Man was declared to be a product of his environment. It was the duty of the physician to use all available means to bring about such an environment as would provide the individual with the best possible conditions of existence. He had this duty even if such an environment had always to be so artificial that expenditure and success were out of all proportion. A "nation" had been transformed into a sum of egoistic individuals divided into classes according to material possessions. In an attitude of hostility, the underprivileged forced the capitalists to provide social measures. Thus the compulsory savings institutions were to be the source to which the sick member had claim. It was not long before the savings institutions became powerful financial institutions which degraded the "patients" to business partners. The medical profession became a trade in which there were rich people and proletarians. The conception of guardian of the biological-cosmic order seemed to disappear entirely. That idea which had still been a driving force for Paracelsus threatened to perish. National-biological and superindividual aims could no longer be discussed. It was an undisputed matter of fact that the common weal was the sum of the welfare of each individual.

HEALTH A MORAL DUTY

National-Socialism has changed the position of the doctor so fundamentally that a doctor with a National-Socialist training and one with a liberal training have very little in common beyond their factual medical knowledge. With the stipulation that the common weal is more important than the welfare of the individual, a complete change in evaluation has taken place. The "people" is no longer just the sum of the individuals, but a primary entity whose individual members are joined biologically. The aim of medical science is to serve this actual entity of the nation, and its goal lies in the future: a healthy future of the nation is to be secured by seeing to its health in the present. Health is regarded as a moral ideal, indeed, almost as

a moral duty. You have the duty toward your nation of being healthy! Every member of the nation has, above everything else, to seek to be healthy, not only because it is advantageous to himself, but because it is indispensable for the nation. National health is the necessary basis on which everything else must grow which we treasure.

Our view is thus extended beyond the present. The inclusion of the science of heredity has also shifted the scientific emphasis. The individual is now considered the temporary embodiment of a hereditary stream which flows from the past into the future. The differences in the cultural value of the various hereditary streams, and the limited possibilities of individual development innate in them, make selection and elimination a duty. A human being cannot become something that he or his environment would have him be but only that of which his hereditary, limited characteristics make him capable.

The biological value of a people is to be found, not in a few record achievements on the part of its individuals, but in the breadth of its culturally valuable hereditary streams. The fostering of such values means the recognition of super-individual organic forms such as clan, family, motherhood, tradition in the sense of acknowledging achievements and talents, encouraging capable people and families of many children. By capable we mean not only the intelligent and mentally advanced but also those of true and loyal character.

DANGEROUS DISCOVERIES

Scientific medical research has remained free in its essence. It is free to choose which of the problems of the bottomless well of the dark unknown it wishes to tackle by scientific methods. However, the new scientific results, instead of being freely available to anyone, should now be controlled by the State. Only that which is advantageous, healthy, and valuable to the future of the people should be made available to the public.

A few years ago a German scientist succeeded in preparing a hormone which, taken in tablet form, renders conception entirely impossible for a period of about three weeks. One can easily imagine what an upheaval such a "harmless" contraceptive would create, and what possibilities of profit are apparent in such an invention to people trained to think in terms of capitalism. American circles offered the inventor the sum of two million dollars for the patent. The inventor, however, recognized the danger for a people that would be exposed without protection to this preparation, and handed his work over to the German Government.

At the Women's Clinic of the Munich University, work was concluded some time ago that had been devoted to the examination of methods of disinfection in vaginal operations. The behavior of the scarred passages of birth during subsequent births was studied. The compilation of about 500 births, whose conceptions had probably taken place during the time of treatment, revealed that by far the majority of the babies born were boys. This striking fact led to further examinations, which revealed that the disinfectants used created a biological environment to which the sex-determining spermatozoa reacted differently. Consequently, it would be possible considerably to vary Nature's sex ratio of about fifty per cent boys and fifty per cent girls. In view of the individual's preference for male descendants, the survival of a people could definitely be imperiled. Hence the discovery was not made available to the public.

Both these examples show that freedom of the sciences should not be allowed to mean freedom for every publication. The vitality of a people is what counts. If a people's biological substance is threatened, it is attacked in its innermost core. On the other hand, a healthy people is healthy for that very reason that it uses all its powers—to which also belong the sciences—in order to secure the best possible conditions for its life and its future.

NEW METHODS OF DISEASE COMBAT

The measures against widespread diseases should be inspired by a more purposeful and more farsighted determination than in liberal times. When it is a matter of the common weal, individual considerations must give way. In carrying out measures of sanitation, a nation can force its individual members to obedience.

Widespread diseases such as tuberculosis can be fought successfully only when all parts of the nation can be reached in the same way. The scientific possibility of an early diagnosis does not necessarily mean a practical benefit for everyone. At the stage when a case of tuberculosis does not yet show any clinical symptoms but when it can already be proved by modern methods, and when above all there are good prospects of a cure, the afflicted used to be discovered by the doctor only by chance, for the very reason that they were still without disturbing symptoms. As long as the individual physician saw his entire task in alleviating the suffering of the individual patient, there was still a wide gap between scientific possibility and practical benefit. In order to bridge this gap, Germany has introduced compulsory examinations.

ON THE TRAIL OF TUBERCULOSIS

Today every child that has reached its tenth year must pass a clinical and X-ray examination. The latter is carried out by a method employing small films. Such a film costs about 4 pfennigs and, since it is as small as a Leica photo, can easily be kept with the index card of the child. In this way the problems of film-developing, storage, and cost have been solved comparatively easily. When the examining specialist discovers a definite case of tuberculosis, the child is assigned to a clinic corresponding to the degree and type of its affliction. In suspected cases the diagnosis is determined by the examination in a diagnostic clinic, of which there are 56 all over Germany and in which serological and X-ray specialists work with all the modern

methods of diagnostics. Every certain case of tuberculosis is sent to a therapeutical clinic suited to its degree, while a "search organization" is employed to discover the source of the infection by examining the environment of the patient, i.e., his parents, brothers and sisters, and school or working associates. The people thus found or suspected to be infected with tuberculosis are also sent to a diagnostic or therapeutical clinic. These institutions are equipped in such a way that their patients, who must usually spend a considerable time there recovering, can continue to train for their vocations: there are trade schools and workshops attached to the clinics.

As a result of these examinations always being made at the beginning of puberty—at the age of ten—and at its end (in the case of boys when they enter military service and in the case of girls when they join the labor service), the age most threatened by tuberculosis can easily be surveyed. Those hereditary branches of the nation which are inclined to tuberculosis can be discovered with comparative speed; and, by means of warning against or prohibiting of marriage in serious cases, the dangerous amassing of tubercular inclination can be prevented, the spread of the disease stopped, and a possible isolation of those threatened carried out.

Practically all of us are, at one time or another, infected by tubercular bacilli. The infection can only become a real tuberculosis when it meets with a suitable disposition, which is due mainly to a specific hereditary constitution. We can influence this specific constitution in so far as we can prevent an amassing of the tubercular inclination whenever we are aware of the hereditary streak of this inclination in both marriage partners.

These two pillars—emphasis on the selection of tuberculosis-resistant hereditary branches and the earliest possible discovery and care of the diseased by compulsory examination—will give future generations an improved biological basis.

REINSTATING THE DISABLED

The fight against rheumatism is similarly organized. Rheumatism costs the German nation about three times as much as tuberculosis (because rheumatic people very often become incapable of work and must draw pensions). With regard to those disabled by accident or war the aim is not material compensation by a pension, but to render the maimed capable of participating again in that most valuable commodity that the nation has to give—work and achievements within the entity of the people.

The accident victim is cared for in a clinic, where he is placed as soon as possible in a workshop equipped with simple tools and materials. Here he practices the first movements required for his work. Later on, games and athletics with their competitive spirit are added as a second factor of recovery. And finally he is sent to a "retraining workshop," such as have been organized for every profession and attached to corresponding large concerns. There every effort is made to re-employ him in his old profession, or at least in his old professional environment; and experienced foremen, collaborating with the doctor, determine the nature and extent of his work. Everything is done to avoid changing professions. The training for an entirely new profession would be expensive and usually means a mental and emotional burden for the patient. Everything—medical treatment, necessary operations, the exercising of motions in the hospital workshop and in athletic competitions—is aimed at rendering the patient fit for his job again. All this applies, of course, to war invalids, too.

HEALTH AND HEREDITY

Behind all these phenomena of medical activity concerned with the people as a

whole there stands the new conception of illness. While materialism declared that health was the abstraction of the sum of all that was vital, we have found our way back to Hypocrates' conception that illness is a derangement of an ordered harmony. We say that a creature is the more ill the more it requires an artificial, unbiological environment to be able to exist. Creatures which can only live in artificial environments and which pass on such a form of life through heredity have lost their natural right to propagation. We have learned to let diseased hereditary streams die out. It is from this spirit that the most vehemently discussed medical deed of National-Socialist Germany—the laws concerning hereditary health—has sprung. If the nation comes first, the physician's main task is not in giving first place to the suffering and danger of the individual but in doing everything to provide future generations of his nation with as broad as possible a basis of health. Those who suffer from a hereditary disease are prevented from passing on this diseased stream. The unfortunate individual is not to be morally condemned: he will be given as favorable a situation in life as can be justified.

Thus the physician is once again regarded as being responsible for the health of the nation. The medical scientist is trying to solve every problem resulting from this with the methods of his science and to place the suitable results at the disposal of the practicing physician. The living blood, the biological substance of our people, has been placed in the hands of the physician as the deepest source of his achievements. It is only from the distance of future generations that the activities and value of this profession can be judged.